Service charges in Gulf Embassies

3083. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any guidelines have been presented to levy service changes in Gulf Embassies for the registration of birth and issuance of certain certificates;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether Government are aware that there is widespread complaint that the service charge levied is exorbitant when compared to other neighbouring countries;

(c) wheher Government are in receipt of any representation from Government of Kerala to review the rate of service charge; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto and the acton taken therein?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) Fees for attestation of documents were rationalized and refixed in US$ and Euros with effect from 1st January, 2002, under the Diplomatic and Consular (Fees) Amendment Rules, 2001. These rates are applicable globally and not restricted to the Indian Embassies in the Gulf region alone.

(c) Yes.

(d) The Government has taken note of the representation.

Payment of property tax by India in New York.

3084. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that New York city Government has filed suit against India for property tax default;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the foreign countries pay property and other taxes to Government of India or cities where they own the properties;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and